



# OMBUDSMAN JOURNAL



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## Something New! Expectant Mom Buddy Program

By Ashlie Counts-Jenkins



An innovative, exciting new program has been started by one of the USS Abraham Lincoln's Ombudsmen, Michelle Hooser. It is called the Expectant Mom Buddy Program and Michelle and the Command were gracious enough to share the specifics of the program with all Navy Family Ombudsmen through this article for the *Ombudsman Journal*.

I asked Michelle to share how the program got started and exactly how she implemented it for the families of the USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72).

### 1. How did the program start?

Well.... During the last Homecoming new dads were first to get off the ship and it was my responsibility to arrange the moms with newborns to greet them. I had not realized just how many women had given birth during the deployment until then. As I talked with them, I remembered my own experience of giving birth while my husband was gone. As navy spouses we move a lot, meaning we don't always have the luxury of family and friends living near to support us. Being pregnant with your hus-

band home can be trying, but while he is away it can be overwhelming! As I got to know these women I found that some were first-time moms and did not know what to expect before the birth or after, some were new to the area and did not really know anyone here and some had difficult pregnancies. That's where the idea of having a "buddy" for new moms came about. New Moms would have someone "here" available to talk with, check up on them, and share their own experiences. I talked with my co-ombudsman, Anna Gordon, and she also thought we had the need for a program like this. I then talked with our advisor, Mrs. Lorna Papke-Dupouy (who just happens to be the wife of the CO of the USS Abraham Lincoln), she also liked the idea and we were off and running with it.

### 2. How easy is it to get buddies signed up? And what kind of screening is done?

Since some of the women that would be due the next time the ship would be underway already had contacted me, I asked them if they would be interested in having a "buddy" assigned to them and all of them said with a sigh of relief, YES! I then spoke to the *Abraham Lincoln Enlisted Support Group* and asked for volunteers. We wanted moms and people willing to make this sort of commitment. I had several volunteers - which really did not surprise me, as navy wives we have either been in the position of having our spouse gone during our own pregnancy and/or birth of a child or know someone who has. This unique perspective gives us all a feeling of compassion and the willingness to reach out and help other new moms. The screening I did was basically asking them what they would do for

(See Expectant Mom on page 4)

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## From the Naval Services FamilyLine Chairman

Dear Ombudsmen,

It is with some joy and sadness that I write this article to thank Sharon Herdt for all that she has done for the Ombudsman Program – not only during her years as one of the CNO’s Navy-wide Ombudsman-at-Large, but throughout her career as a Navy spouse. The Ombudsman program has been close to Sharon’s heart and she has worked hard to make it better for those of us who continue or follow-on.

Many of you have had an opportunity to meet and talk with Sharon during her travels with MCPON Herdt, so you know what I am talking about. She has listened to you and brought back recommendations from you to MCPON Herdt and the CNO on how to improve a program that is vital to the readiness of our Navy.

Sharon has been very active as a member of the Ombudsman Network Advisory Committee and has been a touchstone for how the program is doing in the fleet. She has brought that wealth of experience to the Ombudsman Quality Management Board as well.

On a personal note, it has been my pleasure to have had such a great person to work with and share experiences as well as to discuss how we might improve. I have found that when I need to better understand what the program means to our families or what changes are needed I have no better source of experience than Sharon – a wonderful person who has been there and done it.

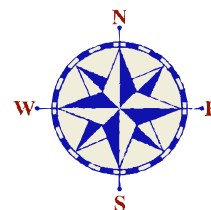
As Chairman of Naval Services FamilyLine, I have been blessed to have Sharon with us as an active participant in our work with the COMPASS program and the Continuum of Resource Education for Navy Spouses. Her active, hands-on participation coupled with her wide experience as a Navy spouse have been invaluable to us in developing our programs.

Clearly I shall miss having Sharon here to learn from. I know that she and Jim are looking forward to their new career – and that is part of the joy – knowing that they are off on another adventure. I wish them well – as I’m sure each of you do.

Part of the joy is also to be able to hail Doreen Scott as the new Ombudsman-at-Large. Doreen is coming to DC from Bahrain. I’m sure you will have the opportunity to meet her as she travels with MCPON Scott. I certainly am looking forward to working with Doreen.

So, as we know from our experiences as Navy spouses, with each departure and new arrival there are new opportunities and new friends. We keep those departing close to our hearts and open them up to our new friends.

David Tuma  
CNO Ombudsman-at-Large,  
Chairman, Naval Services FamilyLine



# BUPERS FORUM

By Rocky Whray, Ombudsman Program Manager

## OMBUDSMAN CODE OF ETHICS

One thing I can expect to discuss whenever I meet with Ombudsmen is some aspect of the Ombudsman Code of Ethics. The Code is the foundation upon which all Ombudsmen must operate when performing their duties. Frankly, this seems like a no-brainer to me.

**Ethic # 1:** "Support the command's mission."

The Ombudsman is selected by and works for the Commanding Officer (CO). Failure to do so places you in direct opposition to the CO and ineffective as his/her representative.

**Ethic # 2:** "Work within the chain of command as directed." The Commanding Officer decides to whom and when to report for various issues. It is therefore important that you adhere to this simple rule. If not, it proves you cannot follow the direction of the Commanding Officer and will likely lose the trust of the CO.

**Ethic # 3:** "Maintain confidentiality." Many would argue that this is the most important ethic. If you break confidentiality, you will lose the trust of both the command and family members. This will absolutely undermine your credibility and render you ineffective. It can also cause irreparable damage to the family in question and to both your reputation and the command's. The exception, of course, is in the case of one of the five reportables; child abuse and neglect, spouse abuse, potential or attempted suicide, potential homicidal behavior, drug and alcohol abuse.

**Ethic # 4:** "Maintain the highest standards of professionalism." You've all heard the saying that, "perception becomes reality." If you are to be respected as an Ombudsman, you must look, talk, and act like a professional. When you are representing the command, you are being held to a very high standard by the command and the family members you represent. What you say and how you say it can affect their lives,

therefore, the expectation and accountability is high.

We all have our opinion of which is most important, but there really is no choice for an Ombudsman. The entire Code must be adhered to. There are hundreds of Ombudsmen who serve their Commanding Officers and countless family members everyday. Each time, it is done in strict accordance with the Ombudsman Code of Ethics. The Navy is well served by the efforts of our Ombudsmen and all others who contribute to the success of this valuable program.

In closing, I think it is important that you know we are in the preliminary stages of a review and rewrite of the Ombudsman program. This will begin with the governing directive, OPNAVINST 1750.1D and the Navy Family Ombudsman Program Manual. The Ombudsman Basic Training Course will follow. If you have ideas that can help with the process, content and formatting, please submit your suggestions to your local Fleet and Family Support Center Ombudsman Coordinator. IF you are not supported by an FFSC, you can e-mail me at p662e2@persnet.navy.mil.

Next issue of the Journal, I'll provide an update of our review/rewrite progress. Until then, thank-you for what you do!



*(Expectant Mom con't from page 1)*

these new moms, would you call them at least once a week? Make sure they had a plan for the birth, such as childcare for older siblings and who would take them to the hospital? And would they be willing to keep me updated as to how the new moms are doing? I evaluated the answers I received and the feeling I got from talking with them and then I chose the buddies.

**3. How does the program work and have you had any problems or things come up that you would want other Ombudsman to know about?**

After talking with both the volunteer buddies and new moms, I assign them to each other, and then the phone calls are made. The buddies make sure that the new moms are signed up for the classes given at Navy-Marine Corp Relief, such as "Budgeting for Baby." I keep in touch with both of them making sure all is going well. As to any problems, not yet! But I am aware that there can be personality conflicts so all are told in the beginning if there are any conflicts to call me and we can switch buddies. This goes for both buddies and new moms.

**4. How long has this program been going on? Is it at other Commands you know about?**

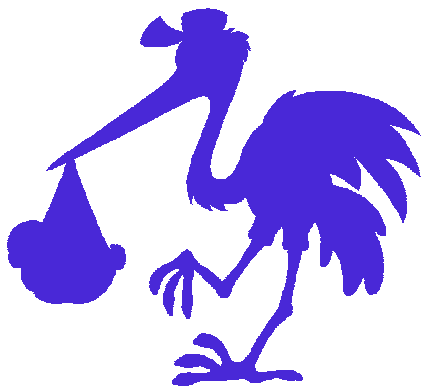
I have not heard of this program at any other Command, but the Lincoln started this about 5 months ago.

It has been a lot of fun working this program and we even have some of the mothers turn around and become Buddy volunteers! There was one happy side effect of the program that I did not see, fathers getting ready to leave have told their spouses they feel a bit more reassured that there will be someone here to look in on their spouses.

We hope that you find the USS Abraham Lincoln's Expectant Mom Buddy Program as exciting as we do!

*Author's note: We want to thank Michelle Hooser,*

*Senior  
John Bar-  
the USS  
Lincoln  
ing this  
idea with*



*Chief  
nett, and  
Abraham  
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wonderful  
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## WHAT'S YOUR IDEA?

Do you have something that has helped your command, like the USS Abraham Lincoln's new Expectant Mom Buddy Program? Don't keep it a secret! Please share it with all Navy Ombudsmen and Marine Corps Key Volunteers by contacting us at FamilyLine. We are glad to spread the word about any new (or old) ideas that work for you as an Ombudsman. The more information we share, the easier it can be to do the demanding job of Command Ombudsman.

How often do you check out the LIFELines website? Have you checked out the really great articles there on Deployment?

Here's the address: [http://www.lifelines2000.org/module/lnk/lnk\\_default.asp?AttribID=508&Alist=508&RList=26](http://www.lifelines2000.org/module/lnk/lnk_default.asp?AttribID=508&Alist=508&RList=26)

Do you have Moms of sailors looking for a place to share with other Moms? Send them to this online address: <http://www.navymoms.org/>

What about the Ombudsman section? <http://www.lifelines2000.org/communities/ombudsman/index.asp>

There is a whole section on Family life: [http://www.lifelines2000.org/module/lnk/lnk\\_default.asp?AttribID=526&Alist=526&RList=26](http://www.lifelines2000.org/module/lnk/lnk_default.asp?AttribID=526&Alist=526&RList=26)

Of course, all you have to do to find any topic on the site is to click on "Search" and type in the subject.

And we all know that your favorite site on LIFELines is the **NSFamilyLine site!**

[www.lifelines2000.org/familyline](http://www.lifelines2000.org/familyline)

# NAVAL RESERVE OMBUDSMAN NEWS

## By Yonna Diggs, Naval Reserve Force Ombudsman-at-Large

Many Reservists will now be returning home from deployment. Preparing for the initial deployment is a challenge for Ombudsmen, but post-deployment can be just as challenging. Ombudsmen should have a heightened awareness at this time of the services that families may need upon return of the service member. It may be a good idea to talk to your Commanding Officer about sponsoring a post-deployment workshop or briefing.

Remember as Ombudsmen, you are not a counselor, so when assisting the Command with post-deployment workshops, seek out the professionals in the field for help. The Navy has many resources that can assist you as well as your community organizations. Some tips to focus on in this workshop are:

1. Reunion orientation for *both* the spouse and returning service member
2. Invite representatives from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserves (ESGR)
3. Be sure to have a Tricare Representative there to deal with transitioning healthcare issues

4. Financial Counseling (Consult the Fleet and Family Support Center on possibly getting their Personal Financial Management Coordinator to assist you.)
5. Ensure that there are qualified professionals to brief children and allow them to talk about post-deployment issues that affect them.

As we move through the transition of pre-deployment, deployment and post-deployment we must be proactive in supporting our families. If you are a new Ombudsman, partner with experienced Ombudsman in the field for suggestions and assistance if necessary.

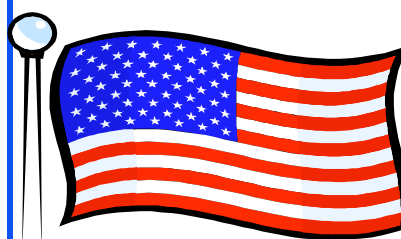
If you would like additional information about the Reserve Ombudsman Program, contact me, Yonna Diggs at [Yonna.Diggs@cnet.navy.mil](mailto:Yonna.Diggs@cnet.navy.mil) or phone (800) 675-5728.

Be sure to visit the Naval Reserve Ombudsman On-line at <http://www.lifelines2000.org/ombudsman/index.asp>

## SEND US YOUR NEWSLETTERS!!

The Ombudsman Journal wants to see what *YOU* are doing in your Ombudsman Newsletters and what your command has been doing to help it's families. You can mail them to us at Naval Services FamilyLine, 1254 9th Street, SE Suite 104, Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5067 or email them to us at [nsfamline@aol.com](mailto:nsfamline@aol.com).

Please send those newsletters!  
WE ARE WAITING  
& WAITING  
& WAITING....



Don't forget -  
Flag Day is June  
14th  
Be sure to fly your  
Flag with pride!

Father's Day is coming soon! June 16th will be here before you know it. Be sure to tell Dad how much you appreciate his service to our country!





# CAN YOU HELP?

Not all volunteers for Naval Services FamilyLine work in the headquarters at the Washington Navy Yard. There is another group of dedicated volunteers who are present in Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard communities around the world. These are the Naval Services FamilyLine Field Representatives. These volunteers are our "eyes and ears" in the field, and we depend upon them to keep us informed of the needs of the families in their area as well as to inform the families about FamilyLine's many resources.

Currently, the following communities are being served by field representatives:

**Annapolis**

**San Diego** (we have a submarine spouse and are looking for several other spouses in different communities as well)

**Honolulu** (both Navy and Coast Guard)

**San Francisco** (Coast Guard)

**Yokosuka**

**Guam**

**La Maddelena**

**Bahrain**

**Pensacola**

**Brunswick, Maine** (co-field reps)

**United Kingdom** (co-field reps)  
**Jacksonville, FL**

**Little Creek** (we are looking for reps to help in Norfolk, Oceana, Portsmouth, and the other communities)

**Fallon, Nevada**

**Bangor, Washington**

**Singapore**

**Groton**

**Mayport**

Field representatives are in close contact with local spouse organizations, Ombudsman councils, Fleet and Family Support Centers, chaplains, and Command Master Chief councils. Field reps are spouses of both officer and enlisted, and many ombudsman volunteer as well. FamilyLine does reimburse for certain expenses, including childcare.

If you are interested in volunteering to be a field representative, or if you would simply like to receive a copy of the position guidelines, **please contact the Director, Field Representatives at 1-877-673-7773 or email [nsfamline@aol.com](mailto:nsfamline@aol.com).**

*Financial and Personal Affairs, Sea Legs, Social Customs and Traditions of the Sea Services, Guidelines for Launching Clubs and Support Groups, Guidelines for the Spouses of Command Senior Enlisted Leaders...* Do you know how Naval Services FamilyLine can continue to send you free information? Because we are totally run by donations from Navy families and Navy friends! If

your command or organization donates to charitable organizations, ask them to include FamilyLine in their giving. Please send any contributions to: Naval Services FamilyLine, 1254 9th Street SE, Suite 104, Washington Navy Yard, D.C. 20374-5067 and put "OJ" somewhere on the check to help us.

# A NAVY SPOUSE'S ALPHABET

By Mrs. Jean Ebbert (with minor modifications. First printed by Wifeline sometime long ago!)

- A** Is for *Adaptable*, which is supposed to be my middle name. Also for *Absent*, which my spouse is *A* lot, especially when the *Anchor's Aweigh*.
- B** Is for *Basic*, as in *Basic Allowance for Quarters* and *Basic Allowance for Subsistence*. (See "L".)
- C** Is for *Cost* of living which is always going up and for *Commissary* which I therefore need more than ever.
- D** Is for *Dependent*, which is what the Navy says I am, even though everybody knows you can't survive Navy life unless you're extremely independent.
- E** Is for *Empty*, which is what my wallet is at the *End of Each* pay period.
- F** Is for *Fabulous Foreign* ports I hope my spouse will bring me back *Fabulous* bargains *From*.
- G** Is for *Government* and *Goldbraid* and "Good Grief, Charlie Brown, who in Washington thought that one up!"
- H** Is for *Housing* "on the economy," which so often seems (a) too small, (b) too expensive, (c) too close to the base, (d) too far from the base (e) all of the above.
- I** Is for *ID* card on which my picture looks *Idiotic*.
- J** Is for *Jack* of all trades, which it would be *Just* dandy if I were one.
- K** Is for *Kilometers* and *Knots*, both of which *Kinda Konfuse* me.
- L** Is for *Lavish*, which is what I wish allowances were instead of *Basic*. (see "B".)
- M** Is for *Mail* from the ship, which is sometimes a *Maybe* thing.
- N** Is for— mmmm— er— uh— (gosh, can't think of anything for this one.)
- O** Is for *Orders* to *Outer Transvania* and *Other* places I never heard *Of*.
- P** Is for *Personal Property* lost and damaged in our last *Permanent* Change of Station, for which I will *Positively* be reimbursed (*Perhaps*).
- Q** Is for *Qualified*, which I am getting to be at practically everything.
- R** Is for my spouse's *Return* from deployment, which is *Really Romantic*.
- S** Is for *Starboard*, which *Sailors on Ships Say* when they mean "right."
- T** Is for *Trips* to the *Tailor*, when his uniform mysteriously *Tightens* across his *Tummy*.
- U** Is for *Unexpected* changes in the ship's schedule, which I *Understand* are *Unavoidable* but which I'm often *Unprepared* for and so they *Usually* make me *Upset*, or even *Uptight*.
- V** Is for *Volunteer* work, which I know is a *Very* fine thing, but sometimes I get too *Vound* up in it.
- W** Is for *Navy Wives*, *Who* are *Wonderful*, *Witty*, *Wise*, *Warm* and *Winsome*. *Whoever Would* argue *With* this is no longer *Welcome* aboard.
- X** Is for *Navy X-change*, which I am very glad *X-ists*
- Y** Is for *Yards* and *Yeoman* and *Yo-ho-ho-*, all of which sound very nautical, don't *You* think?
- Z** Is for "*Zulu*," which is what the Navy calls the last letter of the alphabet, which I think is a *Zany* thing to do.

## Thrift Savings Plan Re-opened

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- One month after the end of the tax season, Sailors will get another chance to sign up for the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), which offers significant tax incentives and can enhance their retirement savings.

Beginning May 15 and lasting through July 31, active-duty members and Reservists can choose to invest from one to seven percent of their basic pay and up to 100 percent of bonus, special or incentive pay in their own TSP account within Internal Revenue Service limits.

Working much like the civilian 401(K) savings plan, pre-tax dollars are invested to provide retirement monies for Sailors. Taxes are deferred on TSP contributions, meaning no federal (and in most cases, state) income taxes are paid on contributions or earnings until the money is withdrawn, usually at retirement when many are in a lower tax bracket.

*TSP is not designed to replace the military's retirement plans.* It is meant to be a convenient way for Sailors to invest in a variety of investment vehicles to provide additional money for retirement.

Sailors can transfer any amount of money into the TSP from certain qualified retirement savings plans in which they are already invested.

TSP account balances can be transferred to an eligible retirement plan if a Sailor leaves the service. This option makes TSP an attractive investment whether someone serves four or 30 years.

The decision to start building a retirement fund early in a career is not always easy. Many fear they will miss the money used to build an investment account. But starting early allows compounding interest to grow the account.

Since the plan was opened to the military during the special enrollment period that ended Jan. 31, nearly 65,000 active-duty Sailors have invested in the plan, leading all the services in enrollment.

There are five investment funds where Sailors can invest all or part of their money; each fund has its own risk and return. *Before investing, Sailors should look at their current financial situation, time until retirement and investment risk tolerance.* Armed with complete, accurate information, Sailors and their families can decide how much to invest in which fund. Investment decisions should be made with long-term goals in mind since the money is invested for retirement.

This is the first enrollment opportunity since the special enrollment period ended Jan. 31, 2002. For more information on TSP, go to <http://www.tsp.gov>.

## NAVAL SERVICES FAMILYLINE Ombudsman Network Advisory Committee

Navy-Wide Ombudsman-at-Large  
Chairman, Naval Services FamilyLine

Navy-Wide Ombudsman-at-Large,  
MCPON Spouse

Navy Ombudsman Program Manager PERS662e2  
Director, NavRes Ombudsman Program  
NavResFor Ombudsman-at-Large  
SgtMaj, USMC Spouse  
HQMC Key Volunteer Coordinator  
USCG Ombudsman Coordinator  
Ombudsman Coordinator, NS FamilyLine  
Editor, Ombudsman Journal

**Naval Services FamilyLine** is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for sea service families. All Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard spouses are automatic members and no dues are required.

**Our mission is to empower Sea Service families to meet the challenges of a military lifestyle with information and resource assistance.**

**Naval Services FamilyLine** volunteers provide assistance, information or referral in all matters pertaining to the military or its lifestyle, and its chairman serves as one of the Chief of Naval Operations' Navy-wide Family Ombudsmen-at-Large. Naval Services FamilyLine also produces and provides informational booklets, and coordinates educational seminars. Volunteers are at the office Monday through Friday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm eastern time.

**Naval Services FamilyLine**  
1254 9th Street SE Suite 104  
Washington Navy Yard, D.C. 20374-5067

Phone: 202 433-2333; Fax: 202 433-4622  
Toll Free: 1-877-673-7773 DSN: 288-2333  
E-mail: [nsfamline@aol.com](mailto:nsfamline@aol.com)

On-line Homepage Address:

<http://www.lifelines2000.org/familyline>

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